

THE
1490. p. 20
HEART'S INDEX:

OR,

SELF-KNOWLEDGE.

TOGETHER WITH

- I. The wonderful Change that the Word and Spirit work upon the Heart, when a Sinner is Converted.
- II. The Excellency of Grace above Nature.
- III. The Safety and Calm of such as have sued out their Pardon in CHRIST.

By R. YOUNG,

Late of *Roxwell in Essex.*

L O N D O N:

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THE
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SECTION I.

PROBABLE it is, that that medicine which hath cured one desperate patient, if it be communicated, may work the same effect upon others; the concealment whereof, would argue in a physician, either too great desire of lucre, or too little love. However, the conscience of good intentions in ourselves (let their success be what it will) is both a discharge and comfort to a free and willing mind.

A fine wit, and a christian will, is like the little bee, that will not off the meanest flower, until she hath made somewhat of it; whereas an unsanctified heart, will (spider-like) suck poison from the choicest of flowers.

Every line of God's word shall add anew to the virtuous mind; and withal heal that vice, which would be springing in it. But with the carnally-minded, it is far otherwise. The same report, wherewith the spirit of *Rahab* melteth, hardens the king of *Jericho*, *Jos. ii.* *Sergius Paulus* was converted, *Elymas* obdured, at the same sermon, *Acts xiii.* That one hard saying of our Saviour, *John vi. 51.* like a file, sharpened eleven of his apostles; while it so blunted the rest of his disciples, that many of them murmured, and from that time went back, and walked no more with him, *ver. 66, &c.* Whence observe, that as all bodies are not equally apt to be wrought upon by the same medicine; so are not all souls by the same means of grace. One remains obstinate and refractory, while others are pliable.

Sin and Satan have no servants but the simple. As for instance: a wise man hearing what a dangerous condition he is

in, by reason of original and actual sins, and how God is so incensed with wrath and indignation against him, that he means utterly to destroy him, if he go on in his impenitency, foreseeth the evil of hell, and preventeth it, by departing from his evil ways; *But fools go on and are punished*, Prov. xxii. 3. and xiv. 16. Stark fools indeed; for if their eyes were opened, to see what a condition they are content at present to continue in, they should need no entreaty to turn their course another way. *Luther* says, 'That if a man could perfectly see his own evils, and the misery that attends them, the sight thereof would be a perfect hell unto him.' And this indeed might prove to be his way to heaven; for then, and not till then, a man sees what need he hath of a Saviour; and then he begins rightly to prize the joys of heaven, when he sees he hath escaped the flames of hell, which those fools, before spoken of, never mean to do, because they think themselves wise, good, happy, and what not. The case of all men by nature. And until that veil or curtain which is drawn over their hearts, be removed; and taken away by unfeigned repentance, and turning to the Lord, they remain stark blind to all saving truths, as the apostle plainly sets down, 2 Cor. iii. 14, 15, 16, 17, 18. See Rev. iii. 17. 1 Tim. vi. 4. And the truth is, were it not for pride and ignorance (springing hence) every man would make it his main business, to work out his salvation with fear and trembling. But to proceed (for this is but an excursion, let in by way of a parenthesis, and in zeal for their good, that desire not their own.) The *Ninevites* by hearkening to *Jonah*, and those murderers of the Lord of life by listening to *Peter*, were converted and saved, *Jonah* iii. 4, 5. *Acts* ii. 37. Wax (we know) yieldeth sooner to the seal, than steel to the stamp.

SECTION II.

OF hearers, there are usually four sorts, as our Saviour shews in the parable of the seed, *Matt.* xiii. 3, to 24. As first, An honest and good heart, will not return from hearing the word unbettered: yea, he will so note what is spoken to his own sin, that it shall increase his knowledge, and lessen his vices. As who (by looking in a glass) shall spy spots in his face, and will not forthwith wipe them out? A wise man will not have one sin twice repeated unto him. Yea, he more rejoiceth in being overcome with a wise and gracious advice, than he would have rejoiced in a revengeful victory. Of which we have a rare example, 1 Sam. xxv. 32, 33. A true argument of an ingenuous nature. Whereas those that will not hearken to,

nor

nor obey the voice of Christ, but rage and storm, are more stubborn than the wind and sea, *Luke viii. 24, 25.* enough to make them blush blood-red when told of it. But secondly, Another sort of hearers are like *Tully's* strange soil, much rain leaves them still as dry as dust: or like the wolf in the emblem, which tho' it sucks the goat, kept notwithstanding his wolfish nature still. And indeed, until the Spirit of God meekens the soul, say what you will, it minds nothing, or nothing to purpose. Whatever an impenitent sinner hears, it presently passes away like the sound of a bell that is rung. Let testimonies and examples never so much concern them, it makes an impression only skin or ear deep: and as in an hour-glass or conduit, that which in one hour runneth in, the same in another hour runneth out again. Who may be resembled to the smith's iron, put it into the fire it is much softened, but put it into the water, it is harder than before. Thirdly, Another sort will very orderly hear the word, and delight in it, until it comes home to their consciences, touches their copy-hold (as *John* served *Herod*) but then they will turn their backs upon it, as the *Jews* served our Saviour, *John vi. 66.* the *Atbenians*, *Paul*, *Acts xvii. 16, to 34.* and *Abab*, *Micaiah*, *1 Kings xxii. 8.* Now these that will not hear an untoothsome truth, but turn their backs upon and fly from instruction, *John iii. 19, 20, 21.* not only declare themselves to be guilty persons (for he confesseth the fact, who to judgment turneth his back; and it is only the weak-sighted, that cannot abide the light) but it proves them to be out of all hope to become better. For that sin is past cure, which turns from and refuseth the cure, *Deut. xvii. 12. Prov. xxix. 1. 1 Sam. ii. 25. 2 Chron. xxv. 16.* turn to the places. And take this for a rule, if ever you see a drowning man refuse help, conclude him a wilful murderer.

SECTION III.

FOURTHLY and lastly (for I pass by those blocks, that can hear the word powerfully delivered for twenty or thirty years together, and mind no more the spirituality of the matter, than the seats they sit on, or the stones they tread on.) There are a generation of hearers, who being told the naked truth, plainly reprov'd for their sins, shewn the judgments of God, and the punishment which they deserve and are like to undergo, if they go on; to the end they may repent and believe, that so they may be saved, will (*Abab* like) carp, and fret, and chafe, and fume, and swell, and spurn against the very word of God, and be ready to burst against it for being so sharp

and searching; and thereupon persecute the messenger, as *Herodias* did *John*, and the Pharisees, *Christ*. They love application as dearly, as a dog does a cudgel. So that like adders, they are not only deaf to the charmer, but like slow-worms, they hiss, and then turn their tails to sting him.

God's holy precepts and prohibitions harden them; as the sun hardens clay, and water hot iron: or else they enrage them, as a furious mastiff-dog, is the madder for his chain. But when it comes to this, that men spurn at the means, and are hardened with the word, as steel is hardened with strokes, or as bulls grow mad with baiting; the best way is to leave them to their judge, who hath messengers of wrath for them that despise the messengers of his love, *Psal.* lxxxi. 11, 12. See *Luke* x. 10, 11. *Prov.* xxix. and i. 25, 26, to 33. *2 Chron.* xxv. 16, 20. *1 Sam.* ii. 25. And in reason, herbs that are worse for watering, trees that are less fruitful for digging, dunging, pruning, are to be rooted out, or hewed down. And to admonish them is to no more purpose, than if one should speak to lifeless stones, or senseless plants, or witless beasts: for they will never fear any thing, till they be in hell-fire. Wherefore God leaves them to be consumed with fire and brimstone, since nothing else will do it.

SECTION IV.

THUS you see, what a wonderful difference there is in bearers! Only herein they agree, all men (good and bad) love the light as it shines; but the most of men hate it, as it discovers and detects: but the difference is so great, that it is admirable to think, how some men would not be prevailed withal, though *Lazarus* should be sent unto them from the dead. And yet with what small means some others have been converted, as were *Justin* the philosopher, *Cyprian* the necromancer, *St. Austin*, *Fulgentius*, *Franciscus*, *Junius*, *Melancthon*, *Adrianus*, *Latimer*, and many others.

One treating upon the prodigal son, and the thief upon the cross, mentions two famous strumpets, that were suddenly converted by this only argument, That God seeth all things, even in the dark, when the doors are shut, and the curtains drawn: and *Montague* tells of a gallant, that (sporting with a courtesan in a house of sin) happened to ask her name, which she said was *Mary*; whereat he was so stricken with reverence and remorse, that he instantly both cast off the harlot, and amended his whole future life. And indeed, no means can be too weak where God intends success: yea, a thought only hath some-

times served the turn. Nor needs there any more to a clarified understanding, than the bare thought of God's omnipresence, omniscience, or omnipotency; as being present every where, knowing every thought and intent of the heart, and being almighty to punish or reward evil and good.

SECTION V.

AND so much of the kinds of hearers: only a question or scruple may hereupon arise. The minister or author, out of compassion to their precious souls, would shew them from God's word, the very faces of their hearts, and like *Peter to Cornelius*, Acts xi. tell them that, whereby (with blessing from above) they might be saved, ver. 14. the which some do kindly entertain, as *Lot* did those angels that came to fetch him out of *Sodom*, Gen. xix. Others as churlishly reject, and as villainously entreat and handle them, as the *Ammonites* did *David's* messengers, 2 Sam. x. 4. Wherein (may some say) lies the difference?

Answer, I could give you sundry reasons of it; I will only name a few, being enjoined to contract all my matter into two sheets.

First, Will makes the difference, and who makes the difference of wills, but he that made them? He that creates the new heart, leaves a stone in one bosom, puts flesh into another; and yet if God denies his grace, it is only when he sees it condemned. As God oftentimes is so provoked by their obstinate hardness and impenitency, that he gives them over to Satan, and up to the hardness of their own hearts, to be led by their lusts, and to walk in their own counsels, as it is, *Psal.* lxxxi. 12. *Rom.* i. 24, 26. So that not God, but ourselves are the authors of sin, and of our own damnation, as it is, *Hos.* xiii. 9. Of which, more in its due place.

Secondly, The holy word of God, which is spirit and life, is so quick, powerful and operative, that it will have its effect: where it does not quicken, it kills. None ever heard it, but they were either better or worse by it. It is a holy fire; those whom it doth not purify and cleanse, by melting into repentance, it doth consume and destroy, by burning in the ashes of profaneness here, of confusion hereafter. It is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth, *Rom.* i. 16. And a sweet savour of life unto life, to them that are saved, 2 Cor. ii. 16. But it becomes the savour of death unto death, unto such as wrest and pervert the same unto their own destruction, 2 Pet. iii. 16. And no marvel, for the same cause may have divers and

contrary effects, in respect of sundry objects, as might be exemplified in the sun, the wind, and the same breath out of one mouth, the earth, the stomach, the rain, &c. as might be largely shewn. In one garden, grow an hundred kind of herbs of several operations and qualities; some nutritive, others infective; yet they all draw their juice from one and the same earth. Every member receiveth nourishment from the stomach, yea; the same meat in the stomach; but that which the liver receives becomes blood, that which the gall receives becomes choler, that which the lungs receive becomes phlegm, and that which passeth into the paps becomes milk: so all receive the same good word of God, but every one does not make the same use of it. For as one hath his faith strengthened by it, his patience increased, his judgment rectified, his will reformed, his life and practice amended, his love and zeal inflamed: so fares it with wicked men, in respect of the contrary vices, &c. Again, the word of God, is like a fructifying dew or rain, which falls not upon any ground in vain. If these celestial showers fall into the garden of a good heart, they raise up herbs and flowers: if in a field, corn or grass; whereas if they fall on clay, they make but dirt; yea, the more rain, the more dirt: if upon kennels or dunghills, a stink. Or if they produce any fruit, it is weeds instead of herbs; or perhaps briars and thorns, to scratch and wound the husbandman that dresses it. Thus I might go on, and shew you how the sacrament of the Lord's supper is received by one to salvation, by another to his greater damnation, 1 Cor. xi. 29. The cloudy pillar which gave light, and was a defence to *Israel*, became darkness and offence to the *Egyptians*, *Exod. xiv. 20.* and the like of manna, *Exod. xvi. 20.* The ark, the red sea, and sundry the like, which I might weary you with. Yea, Christ himself, who is a rock to save all that believe in him, shivers his enemies in pieces, *Matt. xxi. 44.* And immortality, the greatest blessedness of the saints, is the greatest misery to the damned. No wonder then, if these spiders, those bees, the wicked and the godly, suck, the one honey, the other poison, from the self-same flower of holy writ.

SECTION VI.

THIRDLY, Another reason why they so swell against their reprehender, is their guiltiness. And it is a sign the horse is gauled, that stirs too much when he is touched. In the law of jealousies, if the suspected wife were guilty,

guilty, that drank of the bitter water of trial, she would presently swell; if otherwise, she was well enough, *Numb. v. 27.* Nor did you ever hear of any that were offended with wholesome truth for being untoothsome, that disliked the minister for being too sharp and searching, but evil minds. But as good meats are unwelcome to sick persons; so is good counsel to obstinate and resolved sinners. Unsound flesh loves to be stroaked, the least roughness puts it into a rage. Bad wares should have dark shops. Thieves will put out all the lights, that in the dark they may more securely rifle the house, *John iii. 19, 20, 21.* So the conscience that is guilty of flagitious crimes, could wish the Heavens blind.

Fourthly, No wicked man can endure to hear the downright truth; for then they must also hear the sentence of their own condemnation. What a minister delivers is the very word by which they are judged and condemned, therefore they loath as much to hear it, as the prisoner at the bar does abhor to hear his sentence from the just judge. And indeed, if many (as we well know by experience) love not to hear the worst of their temporal causes and cases, nor yet of their bodily distempers, with which their lives or estates be endangered; how much more will wicked men decline from seeing their heinous abominations, and themselves guilty of hell and eternal damnation? Though thereof there be an absolute necessity, if ever they be saved.

SECTION VII.

AND so much of the reasons. From all which we may learn not to impute the cause of wicked men's raging to any miscarriage in the messenger; for he may vindicate himself as *Paul* did, *1 Cor. vii. 10. I have not spoken, but the Lord.* And therefore as the Lord said unto *Saul*, *Acts ix. 4.* that he persecuted him; so they which reject any truth delivered out of the word, do resist God himself, and not his messenger. And this is certain, were Christ himself their minister, they would much more oppose and persecute him, as the Priests and Pharisees did, when they heard him.

Yea, consider it rightly, and you will grant, that there cannot be a greater honour done to a poor minister than this. For, what says one of the fathers? It may well be doubted that ministers open not the word aright, when wicked men kick not against it. Yea, says *Luther*, to preach the Gospel as we ought, is to stir up all the furies of hell against us. And what faith our Saviour himself to his apostles in their pupilage? *The world cannot hate you, but me it hateth, because I testify*

testify of it, that the works thereof are evil, John vii. 7. And so touching *Paul*, who had never become their enemy, but for telling them the truth, and dealing so plainly and so roundly with them. Nor can there be such an argument, that a minister studies more to profit than to please men with his wholesome counsel; as when he will not let them sleep and snort in their sins, but cries aloud against their abominations.

Secondly, We may learn from the premises, that if any receive the word with readiness, and become new creatures by hearing the same, we are not to attribute, or ascribe the praise thereof to the parties converted, or to the means, or to the instrument; but to God who is the author, and gives the blessing. For *Paul may plant, and Apollos may water, but it is God only that giveth the increase*. It is God alone that giveth words unto the wise, and virtue unto their words, 1 Cor. iii. 5, 6, 7. And he will give success to whom, when, and as he pleaseth. Even twelve mean fishermen, when he pleaseth, shall, without force or weapon, armour, hands of men, or stroke stricken, subdue the whole world to their King! *Hilary* found not seventeen believers, and lest not so many unbelievers in a whole city.

Indeed in these days, ministers may tear their throats, spend their lungs, and force their sides, in suing to a deaf world, and say, when they have done all they can, *Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?* Yea, how many painful *Peters* have complained to fish all night and catch nothing? Many professors, and few converts, hath been the lot of the gospel in these last times, and since our means hath exceeded. God's house (as the streets of *Jericho*) may be thronged, and yet but one *Zaccheus* gained to the faith. And why so? But for this cause; if some few, like the bee, do gather from the word whatsoever addeth to their knowledge and virtue, the greatest number use the same as some do artificial teeth, more for shew than for service, more for ability of discourse than activity of practice, to talk of it than to walk by it. Whence it is, that God utters his saving truths as it were in parables; so hiding them from the wise and prudent, (namely, the proud, that are wise in their own eyes) and *reveals them to babes and sucklings*, (that is, the humble and lowly) as *Austin* speaks.

SECTION VIII.

WHICH being so, let not him that hath five talents despise him that hath but two: even those great lights of heaven,

heaven, the sun and moon, take not away the necessity of lamp-light. To the making of the tabernacle, fine linen, and goats-hair, have their use, as well as gold, silver and precious stones. And the same God that gave proportion to the cedar, gave also being to the mushroom.

Nor is the strength or weakness of means, either spur or bridle to the determinate choices of God, who not seldom does greatest acts by weakest agents. He chose *David's* sling, rather than *Saul's* sword, to conquer *Goliath*; frogs, grasshoppers and lice, rather than bears and lions, to fight against *Pharaoh*. Yea, he that with rams-horns overthrew the walls of *Jericho*, hath sometimes chosen vile and weak means to serve himself by in great matters. *Peter* hath a cock to tell him of his cowardice, and *Balaam* an ass, to reprove his avarice. Yea, that God, who will bless where he pleaseth, now and then gives the greater success to the weaker means. The men of *Nineveh* repented at the preaching of *Jonas*: yet the *Jews* did not at the preaching of *Christ*, who was greater than *Jonas*. The apostles did greater miracles in *Christ's* name than *Christ* himself, *John* xiv. 12. It was a greater miracle, than the shadow of *St. Peter* (as he walked the street) should heal many sick persons, *Acts* v. 15, 16. than that the hem of *Christ's* vesture should heal one single woman of her bloody issue, *Matt.* ix. 21, 22. Who then can cavil, or indeed wonder at the ensuing story, the which I am quickly to relate?

Yea, who that hath either heart or brain, shall well consider this preceding matter, and the difference of hearers, and not be forced to acknowledge that which follows to be the case of every one that shall hear it, be they what they will? I mean before their hearts are renewed with the power of God's word, which is the strong arm of the Lord, and the mighty power of God unto salvation, *Rom.* i. 16. And the sword of the spirit, *Eph.* vi. 17. And like as a fire, or a hammer that breaketh even the rock in pieces, *Jer.* xxiii. 29, 30. And that irresistible cannon-shot, that is mighty to beat down all the strong holds of sin and Satan, *2 Cor.* x. 4. Quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and pierceth even to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow; and to the discerning of the very thoughts, and most secret intents of the heart, *Heb.* iv. 12.

SECTION IX.

AND look to it; for if thou dost not see and acknowledge the very secrets of thy heart to be clearly laid open to thy conscience,

science, in the one or the other, first or last of these ensuing characters, I dare peremptorily conclude, that Satan, the God of this world, hath blinded thy mind, that the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should not shine unto thee, *2 Cor. iii. 3, 4. Eph. ii. 2. 2 Thess. ii. 9, 10, 11. 1 Tim. iv. 2.*

But this is the misery ! and a just plague upon our so much ignorance, formality and profaneness, under so much means of grace. There be very few men, that make not the whole Bible, and all the sermons they hear, yea, the checks of their own consciences, and the motions of God's Spirit, utterly ineffectual, for want of wit and grace to apply the same to themselves as they can unto others ; being better able to discern others' moats than their own beams.

If you question what Satan can do in this case, look upon what he hath done to others, as wise and as good as the best of us. I'll give you instances both of the godly and wicked, and likewise testimonies : I pray mind them seriously, and turn to the places, for they are exceeding considerable. In the first place take notice, how he blinded and deluded *Abab's* four hundred prophets, *1 Kings xxii. 22.* and *Judas, John xiii. 2.* and all magistrates when they persecute the people of God, *Rev. ii. 10.* and indeed all men in their natural estate, whereof not a few think they do God service, in persecuting and killing the prophets ; as our Saviour expressly tells us, *John xvi. 2.* But see other particular instances ; as that of *Ananias and Sapphira, Acts v. 3.* Then for the godly, how he hath blinded and beguiled them, as our first parents, *Adam* and *Eve*, *Eve* by herself, and *Adam* by making her his instrument, and that in the state of innocency, when they had wit at will, *Gen. iii.* and holy *David*, a man after God's own heart, *1 Chron. xxi. 1.* then *Peter*, who so dearly loved Christ, *Matt. xvi. 22, 23.*

And having done this, argue thus with thyself ; if Satan so blinded and besotted these ; if he made such use of all these, whereof some were the best and wisest of God's children and servants, who *hate the very appearance of evil*, *1 Thess. v. 22. Jude 23. Ephes. v. 27. 2 Pet. iii. 14. James i. 27.* have the eye of faith, and the Spirit's direction, and know the mind of Christ above others, *1 Cor. ii. 12, 10, 17. John x. 14.* how much more can he work the same upon his own children and servants, that delight only in wickedness, and are ignorant of Satan's wiles, as not having the least

least knowledge or ability to discern spiritual things? 1 Cor. ii.

14. 2 Cor. iv. 4.

But if you still question the truth of this, turn to *John* xiv. 30. and xii. 31. *Gen.* iii. 15. *John* viii. 44. 2 *Tim.* ii. 20. *Eph.* ii. 2, 3. which are all such clear testimonies, that none (who shut not their eyes against the light) can gainsay, *Matt.* xiii. 15. Which being so, in reading this ensuing *Dialogue*, or *Index to the Heart*, make the application to yourselves and not to others; as *David* did *Nathan's* parable, 2 *Sam.* xii. 1, to 8. and *Abab* the prophets, 1 *Kings* xx. 39, to 43. which yet concerned no less than their own lives. And so much the rather, for that in all probability, what this will not effect touching your amendment, no ordinary means are like to do. As what can be further expected? No glass can more lively represent your faces than this book does your hearts, if you be yet in your natural condition, unregenerate. Neither can you look that Christ Jesus himself should call to you severally by name, as he did to *Saul*; for, now we have the gospel written at large, visions and miracles cease. Or put case Christ himself should do so, I question whether you would be any more warned, or reclaimed by it, than *Hazael* was, when the prophet told him what abominable wickedness he should shortly commit, 2 *Kings* viii. 12, 13, &c. Yea, *Abraham* tells *Dives* the contrary, *Luke* xvi. 31. So I come to the Conference itself.

SECTION X.

A LOOSE libertine meeting with his friend that had lately been a formal Christian, he greets him as followeth: Sir, methinks I have observed in you a strange alteration since our last meeting at *Middleborough*; not only in your behaviour, company and converse, but even in your countenance: What is the matter, if I may be so bold?

Convert. Truly, Sir, you are not at all mistaken, nor am I unwilling to acquaint you with the cause, if you can afford to hear it.

Soon after my return into *England*, I was carried by a friend to hear a sermon, where the minister so represented the very thoughts, secrets and deceitfulness of my Heart unto my conscience, that I could but say of him, as the woman of *Samaritania* once spake of our Saviour, *He hath told me all things that ever I did.* Which made me conclude with that unbeliever, 1 *Cor.* xiv. 24, 25. *That God was in him of a truth:* Nor could he ever have so done, if he were not of God; as the young man in the Gospel reasoned with the Pharisees, touching Jesus, when he had opened his eyes that had been blind

blind from his birth, *John ix. 32, 33.* Whereupon I could have no peace nor rest, until I had further communed with him about my estate; for I found myself in a lost condition touching eternity: it faring with me, as it did with those *Jews, Acts ii.* when *Peter*, by his searching sermon, had convinced them, that *Christ, whom they had with wicked hands crucified and slain, was the only Son of God, and Lord of Glory, ver. 36, 37.* And having had the happiness to enjoy the benefit of a sage advice, as I stood in need thereof, (God having given him *the tongue of the learned, to administer a word in season to them that are weary, Isa. l. 4.*) I bless God, his word and Spirit hath wrought in me such a change and strange alteration, that it hath opened mine eyes that were blind before, inclined my will to obedience, which was before rebellious, softened my heart, sanctified and quite changed my actions: so that I now love that good which before I hated, and hate that evil which before I loved; and am delighted with those holy exercises, which heretofore did most displease me; and am displeased with those vain pleasures and filthy sins which in times past did most delight me. Which is such a mercy, that no tongue is able to express! for till that hour, I went on in the broad way, and world's road, to destruction, without any mistrust; whereas now God hath been pleased to take me into his Kingdom of Grace here, and will never leave me until he hath brought me unto his Kingdom of Glory hereafter.

Loose Libertine. What you speak makes me wonder: for I ever held you the compleatest man of my acquaintance; just in all your dealings, temperate and civil in your deportment; yea, I have never seen you exceed in the least, nor heard you swear an oath, except faith and troth, and that very rarely. Besides, you have been a good Protestant, and gone to church all your days.

Convert. What you speak, none that know me can contradict; nor could they ever accuse me of any scandalous crime, or unjust act. Yea, I had the same thoughts of myself; and should any one have told me formerly, that I was such a great sinner, such a devil incarnate as I was, I should have replied as *Hazeel* did to the prophet (telling him of the abominable wickedness he would ere long commit) *What! am I a dog? &c. 2 Kings viii. 12, 13.* And no wonder, for as every man, in his natural condition is stark blind to spiritual objects, *1 Cor. ii. 14.* so the heart of man is deceitful above all things; even so deceitful, that none but God alone can know it, as the prophet

prophet shews, *Jer.* xvii. 10. But because this is a truth that transcends your belief, and because it may be of a singular use to you also, to know the same, I will give you a short character of my former condition; the which done, I doubt not but you will assent unto what I have hitherto said, or shall further relate.

SECTION XI.

FIRST, Touching my knowledge, I mean saving knowledge, without which the soul cannot be good, (as wise *Salomon* witnesseth, *Prov.* xix. 2.) it was such, (though I thought myself wiser than to make scruple of, or perplex myself about matters of religion, as do the religious: even as the king of *Tyrus* thought himself wiser than *Daniel*, *Ezek.* xxviii. 3.) that spiritual things were mostly represented to my understanding false, and clean contrary to what they are indeed. Like corporal things in a looking-glass, wherein those that are on the right-hand seem to be on the left, and those that are on the left-hand seem to be on the right. As it fared with *St. Paul* while he was in his natural condition, *Acts* xxvi. 9. which made me think and call evil good, and good evil; bitter sweet, and sweet bitter; to justify the wicked, and condemn the just; as the prophet complains, *Isa.* v. 20, 23.

As for instance, I most foolishly thought, that I both loved and served God as I ought; yea, I should have taken it in foul scorn, if any one had questioned the same; when indeed I was a traitor to God, and took up arms against all that did worship him in spirit and in truth. I was so far from loving and serving him, that I hated those that did it; and that for their so doing. I could also hear him blasphemed, reproached and dishonoured, without being once stirred or moved at it. I loved him dearly, but I could never afford to speak a word for him; and likewise his children entirely, but instead of justifying them, or speaking in their defence when I heard them scoffed at, scorned, and abused by wicked and ungodly men; all my delight was to jeer at, slight and slander them wherever I came. I more feared the magistrate, than I feared God, and more regarded the blasts of men's breath, than the fire of God's wrath. I chose rather to disobey God, than to displease great ones; and feared more the world's scorns, than his anger.

And the like of Christ that died for me; a strong argument that I loved Christ, when I hated all that resembled him in holiness! Yea, I so hated holiness, that I most bitterly hated

hated men for being holy; insomuch that my blood would rise at the sight of a good man, as some stomachs will rise at the sight of sweet-meats. I was a Christian in name, but I could scoff at a Christian indeed. I could honour the dead saints in a formal profession, while I worried the living saints in a cruel persecution. I condemned all for round-heads, that had more religion than a heathen; or knowledge of heavenly things, than a child in the womb hath of the things of this life; or conscience than an atheist, or care of his soul than a beast. I had always the basest thoughts of the best men; making ill constructions of whatsoever they did or spake; as the scribes and pharisees dealt by our Saviour.

SECTION XII.

AS, O what a poor slave did I hold the man of a tender conscience to be! Yea, how did I applaud myself for being zealous and fearless, together with my great discretion and moderation; when I saw this man vexed for his zeal, that other hated for his knowledge, a third persecuted for the profession of his faith, &c. For (being like *Gain*, *Ishmael*, *Eliab*, *Micah*, *Pharaoh*, and *Festus*) I thought their religion, puritanism; their conscience of sin, hypocrisy; their profession, dissimulation; their prudence, policy; their faith and confidence, presumption; their zeal of God's glory, to be pride and malice; their obedience to God's laws, rebellion to princes; their execution of justice, cruelty, &c. If they were any thing devout, or forward to admonish others, that so they might pluck them out of the fire; I conceived them to be beside themselves, as our Saviour was thought to be by his kinsfolk, and *St. Paul* by *Festus*, Mark iii. 21. John x. 20. Acts xxvi. 24. 1 Cor. i. 18. My religion was, to oppose the power of religion; and my knowledge of the truth, to know how to argue against the truth. I never affected Christ's ambassadors, that preached the glad tidings of salvation, but had a spleen against them; yea, I hated a minister for being a minister, especially, if a godly and zealous one, that spake home to my conscience, and told me my sins; much more if he would not admit me to the Lord's table without trial and examination; yea, then, like *Ahab* to *Elijah*, I became his enemy, and hated him ever after; would impeach his credit, and detain from him his dues. Are not all these strong evidences, that I loved and served God and my Redeemer as I ought? But to make it more manifest what a rare Christian I was,

I thought myself a believer; yea, I could even boast of a strong faith, when yet I fell short of the very devils in believing,

lieving, for they believe the threats and judgments contained in the word, and tremble thereat, *James ii. 19.* Whereas I thought them but scare-crows to fright the simple withal: Yea, I held hell itself but a fancy, not worth the fearing.

Because I was not notoriously wicked, but had a form of Godliness, was civil, &c. I was able to delude my own soul, and put off all reproofs and threatenings, by comparing myself with those, that I presumed were worse than myself; as drunkards, adulterers, blasphemers, oppressors, shedders of blood, and the like; counting none wicked but such. Yea, looking upon these, I admired my own holiness, and thought my moral honesty would be sufficient to save me. Nor did I know wherein I had offended.

And whereas the law is spiritual, and binds the heart from affecting, no less than the hand from acting; I was so blind and ignorant, that I thought the commandment was not broken, if the outward gross sin be forborn. Whence these were my thoughts, I never brake the *first* commandment of having many Gods; for I was no papist, no idolater: nor the *second*, for I worshipped God aright. Nor the *third*, for I had been no common swearer, only a few petty oaths. Nor the *fourth*, for I had every sabbath gone duly to church. Nor the *fifth*, for I ever honoured my parents, and have been a loyal subject. Nor the *sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth or tenth*; for I never committed murder or adultery, never stole aught, never bore false witness; nor could I call to mind that I had at any time coveted my neighbour's wife, servant, &c. And nothing more common with me, than to brag of a good heart and meaning, of the strength of my faith and hope, of my just and upright dealing; and because I abstained from notorious sins, I thought myself an excellent Christian, if God was not beholden to me for not wounding his name with oaths, for not drinking and playing out his sabbaths, for not railing on his ministers, for not oppressing and persecuting his poor members, &c.

SECTION XIII.

AND yet had it been so, as I imagined: admit I had never offended in the least in all my life, either in thought, word, or deed; yet this were but one half of what I owe to God; this were but to observe the negative part of his law, still the affirmative part thereof I had been so far from performing, that I had not so much as thought of it. And to be just in the sight of God, and graciously accepted of him, these two things are required: the satisfactory part to escape

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hell, and the meritorious part to get to heaven. And the true method of grace is, *Cease to do evil, learn to do well*, Isa. i. 16, 17. The fig-tree was cursed, not for bearing evil fruit, but because it bare no good. The evil servant was not bound hand and foot, and cast into prison, for wasting his master's goods, but for not gaining with them. And those reprobates at the last day, shall be bid *depart into everlasting fire*; not for wronging or robbing of any, but for not giving, for not comforting Christ's poor members, *Matt. xxv.* So that my case was most desperate: for though, with that Pharisee, *Luke xviii. 11.* I was apt to thank God, and brag, that I was just, and paid every man his due, yet I never thought of being holy, and of paying God his dues; as his due of believing, or repenting; of new obedience, his due of praying, hearing, conferring, meditating on his word and works, sanctifying his sabbaths, and instructing my children and servants, teaching them to fear the Lord: his due of love, fear, thankfulness, zeal for his glory, charity and mercy to Christ's poor members, and the like.

I should have served God in spirit, and according to Christ's Gospel: as all that are wise-hearted endeavour to live; and believe, and hear, and invoke, and hope, and fear, and love, and worship God in such a manner as his word prescribes. I should have been effectually called, and become a new creature by regeneration, being begotten and born a-new by the immortal seed of the Word. I should have an apparent change wrought in my judgment, affections and actions, to what they were formerly. The Old-man should have changed with the New-man, worldly wisdom with heavenly wisdom, carnal love with spiritual love, servile fear for christian and filial fear, idle-thoughts for holy-thoughts, vain words for holy and wholesome words, fleshly-works for works of righteousness: even hating what I formerly loved, and loving what I formerly hated.

But alas! I have heard the Gospel day after day, and year after year; which is the strong arm of the Lord, and the mighty power of God unto salvation, that is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword; and yet stood it out and resisted, instead of submitting to Christ's call; even refusing the free offer of Grace and Salvation. I have heard the word faithfully and powerfully preached for forty years, yet remained in my natural condition, unregenerate; without which new-birth there is no being saved, as our Saviour affirms, *John iii. 5.* I had not trodden one step in the way to conversion; for the first part of conversion is to love them that love God, 1 *John iii.*

10, 11, 14. I should daily have grown in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: but I was so far from growing in grace, that I had not one spark of grace or holiness, without which no man can see the Lord, Heb. xii. 14. I was also for observing the second table, without respect to the first; or all for outward conformity, not at all for spiritual and inward holiness of heart.

SECTION XIV.

EITHER what I did was not morally good for the matter, or not well done for the manner, nor to any right ends; as out of duty and thankfulness to God and my Redeemer, and out of love to my fellow-members. Without which, the most glorious performances, and the rarest virtues, are but shining sins, or beautiful abominations. God's glory was not my principal end, nor to be saved my greatest care.

I was a good, civil, moral, honest hypocrite, or infidel; but none of these graces grew in the garden of my heart. I did not shine out as a light, by a holy conversation to glorify God, and win others. Now only to refrain evil, except a man hates it also, and does the contrary good, is to be evil still: because honesty without piety, is but a body without a soul.

All my religion was either superstition or formality, or hypocrisy; I had a form of godliness, but denied the power thereof: I often drew near unto God with my mouth, and honoured him with my lips, but my heart was far from him, Isa. xxv. 13. Mark vii. 2, to 14. Matt. xv. 7, to 10. All which considered, viz. the means which God had afforded me, and the little use I had made thereof, left me in a far worse condition, than the very heathen that never heard of Christ. So that it was God's unspeakable mercy, that I am not at this present srying in the flames of hell, never to be freed.

God hath sent unto us all his servants the prophets, rising up early, and they have been instant in preaching the Gospel, both in season and out of season: but my carnal heart hath ever been flint unto God, wax unto Satan: you shall die if you continue in the practice of sin, I heard; but you shall not die, (as saith the Devil) I believed.

SECTION XV.

BESIDES all this, suppose I had none of these to answer for; neither sins of commission, nor sins of omission: yet original sin were enough to damn me, no need of any more; and yet my actual transgressions have been such and so many, and my ingratitude therein so great, that it might have sunk me down with shame, and left me hopeless of ever obtaining

pardon for them. As see but some small part of my monstrous and devilish ingratitude to so good a God, so loving and merciful a Saviour and Redeemer, that hath done and suffered, so much for me, even more than can either be expressed or conceived by any heart, were it as deep as the sea.

Touching what God and Christ hath done for me; in the first place he gave me myself, and all the creatures to serve for my use; yea, he created me after his own image in righteousness and holiness, and in perfect knowledge of the truth, with a power to stand, and for ever to continue in a most blessed and happy condition. But this was nothing in comparison, for when I was in a sad condition, when I had forfeited all this, and myself, when by sin I had turned that image of God into the image of Satan, and wilfully plunged my soul and body into eternal torments; when I was become his enemy, mortally hated him, and to my utmost fighting against him, and taking part with his only enemies, sin and Satan, not having the least thought or desire of reconciliation, but a perverse and obstinate will to resist all means tending thereunto; he did redeem me, not only without asking, but even against my will; so making of me, his cursed enemy, a *servant*; of a *servant*, a *son*; an *heir*, and *coheir with Christ*, Gal. vii. 7. But how have I requited this so great and so superlative a mercy? All my recompence of God's love unto me, hath been to do that which he hates, and to hate those whom he loves.

Christ, the fountain of all good, is my Lord by a manifold right, and I his servant by all manner of obligations. *First*, He is my Lord by the right of creation, as being his workmanship, made by him. *Secondly*, By the right of redemption, being his purchase, bought by him. *Thirdly*, Of preservation, being kept, upheld and maintained by him. *Fourthly*, His by vocation, even of his family, having admitted me a member of his visible church. *Fifthly*, His also (had it not been my own fault) by sanctification, whereby to possess me. *Lastly*, He would have me of his court by glorification, that he might crown me; so that I was every way his. God hath raised me from a beggar to a great estate: but how did I requite him? I would not, if possible, suffer a godly and conscientious minister to be chosen, or to abide where I had to do: But to bring in one that would flatter sin, and flout holiness, discourage the godly, and encourage the wicked, I used both my own, and all my friends utmost ability. Much more might be mentioned, but I fear to be tedious.

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Now argue with all the world, and they will conclude, there is no vice like ingratitude! But I have been more ungrateful to God, than can be express'd by the best orator alive. It was horrid ingratitude in the *Jews*, to scourge and crucify Christ, who did them good every way; for he healed their diseases, fed their bodies, enlightened their minds, of God became man, and lived miserably among them many years; that he might save their souls: but they fell short of my ingratitude to God, in that most of them were not in the least convinced, that he was the Messiah sent from God, and promised from the beginning. But I have not only denied this Lord that bought me, but I hated him; yea, most spitefully and maliciously fought on Satan's and sin's side against him, persecuted his children, and the truth, with all my might: and all this against knowledge and conscience, after some measure of illumination, which cannot be affirmed of the *Jews*. Yet miserable wretch that I was, if I could have given him my body and soul, they should have been saved by it, but he would have been never the better for them.

SECTION XVI.

LASTLY, to tell you something that is more strange! Notwithstanding all this that hath been mentioned, and much more: yet I thought myself a good Christian, forsooth, yea, with that *young man in the Gospel*, I thought I had kept all the commandments. Nor was I a whit troubled for sin, either original or actual, but my conscience was at quiet, and I was at peace; neither did any sin trouble me. Yea, I would applaud myself with that Pharisee, *Luke xviii. 9, to 15.* and say, *I was not like other men*: not once doubting of my salvation. I ever refused to do what my Maker commanded, and yet confidently hoped to escape what he threatened. Nor did I doubt of having Christ my Redeemer and Advocate in the next life, when I had been a bitter enemy to him and his members in this life. Here was blindness with a witness; as it is not to be believed how blind and blockish men are, that have only the flesh for their guide; especially if they have hardened their hearts, and seared their consciences with customary sinning. As I could give you for instance, a large catalogue of rare examples how sin hath befuddled men, and what stark fools carnal men are in spiritual things, be they never so wise for mundane knowledge. But lest it should be taken for a digression, or excursion, you shall have a list of them by themselves, the which I will add as an Appendix to this discourse, or dialogue. In the mean

time I have given you a brief of my manifold provocations, and great ingratitude to my Maker and Redeemer, for otherwise I might be endless in the prosecution thereof. It remains that I should in like manner lay open my original defilement; which is the fountain whence all the former (whether sins of commission, or sins of omission) do flow. But touching it, be pleased to peruse that small tract, entitled, *A short and sure Way to Grace and Salvation: Or, Three Fundamental Principles of Christian Religion.* By R. Y. from p. 4, to p. 10.

SECTION XVII.

Loose Libertine. IF this hath been your case, no wonder it hath startled you; for to deal plainly with you, as you have done with me; what I have heard from you, makes me tremble. For if such honest moral men, that live so unrepitably as you have done, go not to heaven, what will become of me, that have been so openly profane and notoriously wicked all my time? Yea, it contented me not to do wickedly myself, and to damn my own soul, but I have been the occasion of drawing hundreds to hell with me, by seducing some, and giving ill example to others, (the infection of sin being much worse than the act.) As how many have I drawn to be drunkards, and swearers, and whoremongers, and profane persons! insomuch that the blood of so many souls as I have drawn away will be required at my hands. Yea, my life has been so debauched and licentious, that I have brought a scandal upon the Gospel, made it odious to the very *Turks* and infidels, *Rom. ii. 24.*

Convert. Alas! what I did that was morally good, or what evil I refrained, was more for self ends, or for fear of men's laws, than for love of Christ's Gospel. True, I went under the notion of an honest man, and a good Christian: I was baptized into the faith, and made a member of Christ's visible church; but I was so far from endeavouring to perform what I then promised, that in effect I even renounced both Christ and my baptism, in persecuting him, and all that sincerely professed his name; thinking I did God good service therein, *John xvi. 2. Gal. i. 13, 14. Phil. iii. 6.* Nor was it for want of ignorance, that you thought so of me: for by nature (be we never so mild and gentle) we are all of the seed of the serpent, *Gen. iii. 15.* and children of the devil, *John viii. 44.* Yea, the very best moral men, is but a tame devil, as *Athanasius* well notes. But it is a true proverb, *The blind eat many a fly, and all colours are alike to him that is in the dark.*

Loose Libertine. So much the worse is my condition; for my conscience

conscience tells me, there is not a word you have spoken of yourself, but I can justly apply the same unto my own soul, and a great deal more: for whereas you have been a moral honest man, so that none except yourself, could tax you for breaking either God's law or man's: I have been so wicked and profane, that I could most presumptuously, and of set purpose, take a pride in wickedness, commit it with greediness, speak of it, defend it, joy in it, boast of it, tempt and inforce to it, yea, mock them that disliked it. As if I would send challenges into heaven, and make love to destruction, and yet applaud myself, and prefer my own condition before other men's, saying, I was no dissembler; yea, I hated the hypocrisy of professors: I do not justify myself, and despise others, like the puritans: I am not factious, schismatical, singular, censorious, &c. I am not rebellious, nor contentious, like the *Brownists* and *Anabaptists*. I am a good fellow, and love an honest man with my heart, &c. and as touching a good conscience, I was never troubled in mind, as many scrupulous fools are; I have a good heart, and mean as well as the precisest. But now I see the devil and my own deceitful heart deluded me so, that my whole life hitherto hath been but a dream, and that like a blind man I was running headlong to hell, when yet I thought myself in the way to heaven. Just as if a beggar should dream that he were a king, or as if a traitor should dream of his being crowned, when indeed he was to be beheaded; the case of *Laodicea*, Rev. iii. 17. the young man in the Gospel, Luke xviii. 20, 21. and that *Pharisee*, spoken of Luke xviii. 11, 12.

SECTION XVIII.

Convert. IT was not your case alone, but so it fares with the worst of sinners: only it much rejoices me, that it hath pleased God to open your eyes, to see all this in yourself. For flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto you. Yea, we are naturally so blind, and deaf, and dead in sin, and in foul, that we can no more discern our spiritual filthiness, nor feel sin to be a burden, than a blind *Ethiopian* can see his own blackness, or than a dead man can feel the weight of his burden when it is laid upon him, *Acts* xxviii. 27. *Isa.* vi. 9, 10.

And this common experience shews; for if you observe it, who more jocund, confident and secure, than the worst of sinners? They can strut it under an insupportable mass of oaths, blasphemies, thefts, murders, adulteries, drunkenness, and other the like sins; yea, can easily swallow these spiders, with *Mitbridates*, and digest them too; when one that is

regenerate shrinks under the the burden of wandering thoughts, and want of proficiency. But why is it? They are dead in sin, *Eph. ii. 1. Rev. iv. 1.* Now lay a mountain upon a dead man, he feels not once the weight of it.

To a Christian that hath the life of grace, the least sin lies heavy upon the conscience! But to him that is dead, let his sins be as heavy as a mountain of lead, he feels in them no weight at all.

Again, they are insensible of their sin and danger, because ignorant; for what the eye seeth not, the heart rueth not. Security makes worldlings merry, and therefore are they secure, because they are ignorant. A dunce, we know, seldom makes doubts; yea, *A fool, says Solomon, boasteth and is confident, Prov. xiv. 19.* neither do blind men ever blush. And the truth is, were it not for pride and ignorance, a world of men would be ashamed to have their faces seen abroad. For take away from men's minds vain opinions, flattering hopes, false valuations, imaginations, and the like; you will leave the minds of most men and women, but poor shrunken things, full of melancholy, indisposition, and displeasing to themselves. Ignorance is a veil or curtain to hide away their sins, whereupon they are never troubled in conscience, nor macerated with cares about eternity; but think that all will be well.

The devil and the flesh prophesy prosperity to sin; yea, life and salvation, as the pope promised the powder-traitors: but death and damnation (which God's spirit threatens) will prove the crop they shall reap: for God is true, the Devil and all flesh are liars.

When we become regenerate, and forsake sin; then the Devil strongly and strangely assaults us, as he did Christ, when he was newly baptized; and *Pharaoh* the children of *Israel*, when they would forsake *Egypt*; and *Herod* the children, when Christ was to come to deliver his people. Whence commonly it comes to pass, that those think best of themselves, that have the least cause; yea, the true Christian, is as fearful to entertain a good opinion of himself, as the false is unwilling to be driven from it. They that have store of grace mourn for the want of it, and they that indeed want it, chant their abundance. None so apt to doubt their adoption, as they that may be assured of it: nor none more usually fear than they that have the greatest cause to hope. We feel corruption, not by corruption, but by grace, and therefore the more we feel our inward corruption, the more grace we have.

Contrarieties, the nearer they are to one another, the sharper is the conflict between them. Now of all enemies, the spirit and the flesh are nearest one to another, being both together

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in a regenerate man, and in all the faculties of the soul, and in every action that springeth from those faculties. The more grace, the more spiritual life; and the more spiritual life, the more antipathy to the contrary; whence none are so sensible of corruption as those that have the most living souls.

SECTION XIX.

NOW for remedy of the contrary, there cannot be a better lesson for carnal men to learn than this. All the promises of God are conditional, to take place, if we repent; as all the threatenings of God are conditional, to take place, if we repent not. But wicked men, as they believe without repenting; their faith being mere presumption: so they repent without believing, their repentance being indeed desperation. And this observe, we are cast down in the disappointment of our hopes, in the same measure, as we were too much lifted up, in expectation of good from them. Whence these peremptory presumers, if ever they repent, it is commonly as *Francis Spira*, an advocate of *Padua* did: and never did any man plead so well for himself, as he did against himself.

One star is bigger than the earth, yet it seems many degrees less. It is the nature of fear to make dangers greater, helps less than they are. Christ hath promised peace and rest unto their souls that labour, and are heavy laden, and to those that walk according to rule, *Matt. xi. 28. Gal. vi. 16.* even peace celestial in the state of grace, and peace eternal in the state of glory. Such therefore as never were distressed in conscience, or live loosely, never had true peace. Peace is the daughter of righteousness, *Rom. v. 1. Being justified by faith, we have peace with God.* But he who makes a bridge of his own shadow, will be sure to fall into the water.

Those blocks that never in their life were moved with God's threatenings, never in any strait of conscience, never groaned under the burden of God's anger: they have not so much as entered into the porch of this house, or lift a foot over the threshold of this school of repentance. Oh! that we could but so much fear the eternal pains, as we do the temporary; and be but so careful to save our souls from torments as our bodies. In the meantime, the case of these men is so much the worse, by how much their fear is the less. It faring with the soul, as with the body; those diseases, which do take away all sense of pain, are of all others most desperate: As the dead-palsy, the falling-sickness, the sleepy-lethargy, &c. And the patient is most dangerously sick when he hath no feeling thereof. In like manner, whilst they suppose themselves to be free from judgment

ment, they are already smitten with the heaviest of God's judgments, a heart that cannot repent, *Rom. ii. 5.*

In a lethargy, it is needful the patient should be cast into a burning fever, because the senses are benumbed, and this will waken them, and dry up the besotting humours. So in our dead security, before our conversion, God is fain to let the law, sin, conscience and Satan loose upon us, and to kindle the very fire of hell in our souls, that so we might be rouzed out of our security; but thousands of these blocks both live and depart with as great hopes, as men go to a lottery, even dreaming of heaven, until they awake in hell. For they too often die without any remorse of conscience, like blocks: or as an ox dies in a ditch. Yes, thousands that live like *Laban*, die like *Nabal*, (which is but the same word inverted) whilst others, the dear children of God, die in the distress of conscience. For it is not every good man's hap to die like *Antoninus Pius*, whose death was after the fashion and semblance of a kindly and pleasant sleep. However, *St. Austin's* rule will be sure to hold, *He cannot die ill, that hath lived well.* And for the most part, *He that lives conscionably, dies comfortably*, and departeth rich. And so you see how it fares with the wickedest and worst of men, Wherefore if you are truly sensible of your wretchedness, it is a good sign that you are in some forwardness to be recovered; and really to become so good, as formerly you but dream'd or imagin'd yourself to be. And indeed the very first step to grace, is to feel the want of grace, and the next way to receive mercy, is to see yourself miserable. Therefore our constant and most diligent search should be to find out the naughtiness of our own hearts; and to get strength from God against our prevailing corruptions.

SECTION XX.

Loose Libertine. BUT is there any hope for one so wicked as I? who have turned the grace of God into wantonness, applying Christ's passion as a warrant for my licentiousness, not as a remedy, and taking his death as a licence to sin, his cross as a letter-patent to do mischief. As if a man should head his drum of rebellion with his pardon. For I have most spitefully and maliciously taken up arms against my Maker, and fought against my Redeemer all my days.

Convert. Do but unfeignedly repent you of your sins, and forsake your former evil ways, and lay hold upon Christ by a true and lively faith, my soul for your's, God is very ready to forgive them, be they never so many and innumerable for multitude; never so heinous for quality and magnitude. Yea, I can shew you your pardon from the great King of Heaven, for all that

is past, the which you may read at large, *Isa.* lv. 7. *Ezek.* xviii. 21, to 29. and xxxiii. 11. *Joel* ii. 12, 13, 14. Yea, read *1 Cor.* vi. 10, 11. together with the story of *Manasses*, *Mary Magdalene*, the thief, and the prodigal son: and you shall see precedents thereof. Yea, the very murderers of the Son of God, upon their serious and unfeigned repentance, and stedfast believing in him, received pardon and salvation. And indeed despair is a sin which never knew *Jesus*. True, every sin deserves damnation; but no sin can condemn, but the lying and continuing in it. True repentance is ever blessed with forgiveness. And know this, that God's mercy is greater than thy sin, whatever it be: you cannot be so infinite in sinning, as he is infinite in pardoning, if you repent; yea, sins upon repentance are so remitted, as if they had never been committed. *I will put away thy transgression as a cloud, and thy sins as a mist*, *Isa.* xlv. 22. And what by corruption hath been done, by repentance is undone; as the former examples witness. *Come, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow*, *Isa.* i. 18. yea, *whiter than snow*. For the prophet *David*, laying open his blood-guiltiness and his original impurity, useth these words, *Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow*, *Psal.* li. 7. And in reason, did Christ come to call sinners to repentance? And shall he not shew mercy to the penitent? Or, who would not cast his burden upon him, that desires to give ease? *As I live, saith the Lord, I would not the death of a sinner*, *Ezek.* xiii. 32. and xxxiii. 11.

Only, apply not this salve, before the ulcer be searched to the bottom. Lay not hold upon mercy, until thou beest thoroughly humbled. The only way to become good is, first to believe that you are evil, and by accusing ourselves, we prevent Satan; by judging ourselves, we prevent God.

Are we as sick of sorrow as we are of sin? Then may we hopefully go to the Physician of our souls, who came into the world only to cure the sick, and to give light to them only who sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death. God does not pour the oil of grace, but into a broken and contrite heart.

Wouldst thou get out of the miserable estate of nature into the blessed estate of grace? and of Satan's bond slave, become the child of God, and a member of Christ? Wouldst thou truly know thine own heart? and be very sensible how evil and wicked it is, that so thou may'st have a more humble conceit of thyself? Lay to heart these three particulars:

1. *The Corruption of our Nature, by reason of original sin.*
2. Our

2. Our manifold *breach of God's righteous law, by actual sin.* 3. The *guilt and punishment* due to us for them both. This being done, thou shalt see and find thy necessity of a Redeemer. And it is thirst only that makes us relish our drink, hunger our meat. The full stomach of a Pharisee, surcharged with superfluities of his own merits, will loath the honey-comb of Christ's righteousness. This was it that made the young prodigal to relish even servants fare, tho' before wanton, when full fed at home. No more relish feels the pharisaical heart in Christ's blood, than in a chip: but O how acceptable is the fountain of living water to the chafed hart, panting and braying? the blood of Christ to the weary and tired soul? to the thirsty conscience, scorched with the sense of God's wrath? He that presents him with it, how welcome is he? even as a special choice man, one of a thousand. And the deeper the sense of misery is, the sweeter the sense of mercy is.

SECTION XXI.

THEN if you would be satisfied for time to come, whether your repentance and conversion be true and sound, these particulars will infallibly inform you. If you shall persevere (when this trouble for sin is over) in doing that which now you purpose, it is an infallible sign your repentance is sound, otherwise not. If thou dost call to mind the vow which thou madest in thy baptism, and dost thy endeavour to perform that which then thou didst promise; if thou dost square thy life according to the rule of God's word, and not after the rudiments of the world. If thou art willing to forsake all sin, without reserving one, for otherwise that one sin, may prove the bane of all thy graces, even as Gideon had seventy sons, and but one bastard, and yet that bastard destroyed all the rest that were legitimate, (*Judges ix. 5.*) Sin is like the ivy in the wall, cut off bough, branch, body, stump, yet some sprig or other will sprout out again: till the root be pluck'd up, or the wall pulled down and ruined, it will never utterly die.

Regeneration or new-birth, is a creation of new qualities in the soul, as being by nature only evil disposed. God's children are known by this mark, *They walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit*, Rom. viii. 1. If Christ have called you to his service, your life will appear more spiritual and excellent than others.

As for your falls, it is a sign that sin hath not gained your consent, but committed a rape upon your soul, when you cry out to God. If the ravished virgin under the law cried out, she was pronounced guiltless. A sheep may fall into the mire, but a

Twine delights to wallow in the mire. Great difference between

a woman that is forced, though she cries out and strives, and an alluring adulteress.

Again, the thoughts of the godly are godly, of the wicked worldly; and by these, good and evil men are best and truest differenced one from another. Would we know our own hearts, and whether they be changed by a new birth: examine we our thoughts, words, actions, passions; especially our thoughts will inform us, for these cannot be subject to hypocrisy, as words and deeds are.

SECTION XXII.

THEN by way of caution, know, that a child may as soon create itself, as a man in the state of nature, regenerate himself. We cannot act in the least, unless God bestows upon us daily private grace to defend us from evil, and daily positive grace enabling us to do good. And those that are of Christ's teaching, know both from the word and by experience, that of themselves they are not only weak, but even dead to what is good, moving no more than they are moved, that their best works are faulty, all their sins deadly, all their natures corrupted originally. *You hath he quickened that were dead in trespasses and sins,* Eph. ii. 1. Yea, we are altogether so dead in sin, that we cannot stir the least joint, no not so much as feel our own deadness, nor desire life, except God be pleased to raise and restore our souls from the death of sin, and grave of long custom, to the life of grace. Apt we are to all evil, but reprobate and indisposed to all grace and goodness, yea, to all the means thereof.

My powers are all corrupt, corrupt my will:

Marble to good, but wax to what is ill.

Insomuch that we are not sufficient of ourselves to think, much less to speak, least of all to do that which is good, 2 Cor. iii. 5. *John xv. 4, 5.* If we have power to chuse or refuse the object, to do these well we have no power. We have ability, we have will enough to undo ourselves, scope enough hellward: but neither motion, nor will to do good; that must be put in to us by him that gives both power and will, and power to will.

Finally, each sanctified heart feels this, but no words are able sufficiently to express what impotent wretches we are, when we are not sustained. So that we have no merit, but the mercy of God to save us: nothing but the blood of Christ, and his mediation, to cleanse and redeem us: nothing but his obedience to enrich us. As for our good works, we are altogether beholden to God for them, not God to us; not we to ourselves, because they are only his works in us.

Whatsoever thou art, thou owest to him that made thee:

What-

Whatever thou hast, thou owest to him that redeemed thee. Therefore if we do any thing amiss, let us accuse ourselves: if any thing well, let us give all the praise to God. And indeed this is the test of true or false religion: that which teacheth us to exalt God most, and most to depress ourselves, is the true: that which doth most prank up ourselves, and detract from God, is the false, as *Bonaventure* well notes.

SECTION XXIII.

NOW to wind up with a word of exhortation: If thou art convinced and resolvest upon a new course, let thy resolution be peremptory and constant; and take heed you harden not again, as *Pharaoh*, the *Philistines*, the *young man in the Gospel*, *Pilate* and *Judas* did: resemble not the iron, which is no longer soft, than it is in the fire; *For that good (saith Gregory) will do us no good, which is not made good by perseverance.* If with these premonitions, the Spirit hath vouchsafed to stir up in thine heart any good motions, and holy purposes to obey God, in letting thy sins go; *Quench not, grieve not the Spirit,* 1 Thess. v. 19. Return not with the dog to thy vomit, lest thy latter end prove seven-fold worse than thy beginning; *Matt. xii. 43, 45.* Oh, it is a fearful thing to receive the grace of God in vain! and a desperate thing, being warned of a rock, wilfully to cast ourselves upon it! Neither let Satan persuade you to defer your repentance; no not an hour, lest your resolution proves as a false conception, which never comes to bearing. Besides death may be sudden: even the least of a thousand things can kill you, and give you no leisure to be sick.

Thirdly, If thou wilt be safe from evil works, avoid the occasions; have no fellowship with the workers of iniquity: neither fear their scoffs; for this be sure of, If your person and ways please God, the world will be displeased with both; if God be your friend, men will be your enemies: if they exercise their malice, it is where he shews mercy. But take heed of losing God's favour to keep theirs.

Beda tells us of a great man, that was admonished by his friends in his sickness to repent: who answered, He would not yet; for that if he should recover, his friends and companions would laugh at him: but growing sicker and sicker, they again prest him; but then his answer was, That it was now too late; for I am judged and condemned already.

A man cannot be a *Nathanael*, in whose heart there is no guile, but the world counts him a fool. But Christ says, *Verily, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven,* *Matt. xviii. 13.*

Again,

Again, Satan and your deceitful heart will suggest unto you, that a religious life is a dumpish and melancholy life : but holy David will tell you, *That light is sown to the righteous, and joy to the upright*, Psal. xcvi. 11. Isa. lxi. 14. And experience tells us, that earthly and bodily joys, are but the body, or rather the dregs of that joy which God's people feel and are ravished with. As, Oh the calm and quietness of a good conscience ! the assurance of the pardon of sin and joy in the Holy Ghost, the honesty of a virtuous and a holy life, how sweet they are ! Yea, even Plato, an heathen, could say, *That if wisdom and virtue could but represent itself to the eyes, it would set the heart on fire with the love of it.* And the like of a sinner's sadness ; as hear what Seneca says, *If there were no God to punish him, no devil to torment him, no hell to burn him, no man to see him ; yet would he not sin, for the ugliness and filthiness of sin, and the guilt and sadness of his conscience.* But experience is the best informer : wherefore take the counsel of holy David, Psal. xxxiv. 8. *O taste and see that the Lord is good ; blessed is the man that trusteth in him.* To which accordeth that of holy St. Bernard, *Good art thou, O Lord, to the soul that seeks thee ; What art thou to the soul that finds thee ?* As I may appeal to any man's conscience, that hath been softened with the unction of grace, and truly tasted of the powers of the world to come, to him that hath the love of God shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost ; whether his whole life be not a perpetual *Hallelujah*, in comparison of his natural condition : whence they are able to slight all such objections, as he did. You tell me, that scrupling at small matters, is but stumbling at straws, that they be but trifles : when I know your tongue can tell nothing but truth, I will believe you.

Fifthly, Beg of God that he will give you a new heart ; and when the heart is changed, all the members will follow after it, as the rest of the creatures after the sun when it ariseth. But without a work upon the heart, wrought by the Spirit of God, it will follow its own inclination to that which it affecteth, whatsoever the judgment shall say to the contrary. That must be first reformed, which was first deformed. It is idle, and to no purpose to purge the channel, when the fountain is corrupt. Whence the apostle orderly bids us, first, *Be renewed in the spirit of your mind* ; and then, *let him that stole, steal no more*, Eph. iv. 23, 24. Yea, it is God's own counsel to the men of Jerusalem, Jer. iv. *Wash thy heart from wickedness, that thou mayst be saved*, ver. 14. It is most ridiculous to apply

apply remedies to the outward parts, when the distemper lies in the stomach. To what purpose is it to crop off the top of weeds, or lop off the boughs of the trees, when the root and stalk remain in the earth? As cut off the sprig of a tree, it grows still; a bough, an arm, still it grows; lop off the top, yea, saw it in the midst, yet it will grow again; stock it up by the roots, then (and not till then) it will grow no more: whence it is that God saith, *Give me thine heart*, Prov. xxiii. 26. Great cities once expugned, the drops and villages will soon come in of themselves; the heart is the treasury and storehouse of wickedness, *Matt. xii. 34.* such as the heart is, such are the actions of the body which proceed from it, *Matt. xii. 34.* Therefore, as Christ saith, *Make clean within, and all will be clean*; otherwise not, *Matt. xxiii. 26.* Therefore David's prayer is, *Create a new heart in me, O Lord, and renew a right spirit within me*, Psal. li. 10. Do thou the like, importune him for grace, that you may firmly resolve, speedily begin, and continually persevere in doing, and suffering his holy will: desire him to inform and reform you so, that you may neither misbelieve, nor miss-live; to change and purify your nature, subdue your reason, rectify your judgment, reform and strengthen your will, renew your affections, and bear down in you whatsoever stands in opposition to the sceptre of Jesus Christ.

Sixthly and lastly, If you receive any power against your former corruptions, forget not to be thankful, yea, study all possible thankfulness, for that you and I are not at this present frying in hell flames, never to be freed; that we have the offer of grace here, and glory hereafter, it is of his unspeakable goodness. And there is nothing more pleasing to God, or profitable to us, both for the procuring the good we want, or continuing the good we have, than thankfulness. He will sow there (and there only) plenty of his blessings, where he is sure to reap plenty of thanks and service. But who will sow those barren sands, where they are sure not only to be without all hope of a good harvest, but are sure to lose both their seed and labour? *Consider what hath been said, and the Lord give you understanding in all things.* And so much for the Second Part. An Appendix follows, wherein you have instances of all sorts, how sin besets men.

